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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 001828

SIPDIS

STATE FOR PM/WRA AND EUR/WE

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TAGS: [ENRG](#) [ETTC](#) [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [TRGY](#) [BE](#)
SUBJECT: BELGIUM SIGNS CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

REF: STATE 125512

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Richard Eason, reason 1.4(b)
) and (d).

¶1. (C) On December 2, Poloff delivered reftel information on the United States position on the Convention on Cluster Munitions to Werner Bauwens, Director of the MFA Office of Non-Proliferation and Export Controls. Bauwens said that Belgium will sign the CCM on December 3 in Oslo. According to news reports, it did so at the Oslo meeting on December 3. Bauwens showed Poloff the Belgian Foreign Minister's intervention for the meeting, which he was drafting. He said that Belgium's hope is to extend the list of signatories and universalize the norms contained in the CCM. He said that every positive step by non-signatory nations in the same direction will be welcomed. Belgium does not want to cast blame on those who do not sign, but wants to look for dialogue, Bauwens said.

¶2. (C) Bauwens insisted that the negotiation and signature of the CCM has had no actual negative effects on NATO, which he believes is underscored by the lack of any escalation of the issue to Ambassadorial level in NATO. Interoperability will be no more affected, he said, than it was when the convention prohibiting anti-personnel mines was signed by a number of countries, including Belgium. He promised that if ever any issue of interoperability with NATO arises, the GOB and NATO will find a way to deal with it. He said that use of cluster munitions by non-signatories is not a "Belgian matter", and Belgium could accept their use during a joint mission. For example, he said, if a Belgian contingent got into trouble during a joint mission in Afghanistan, and U.S. commanders decided that the best way to solve the problem was for U.S. forces to use cluster munitions, Belgium would not object.

¶3. (C) Belgium has already begun destroying its stockpiles of deadly cluster munitions, and Bauwens estimates they will be all gone by mid-2009. The Belgians will still keep stockpiles of cluster munitions used for purposes such as jamming radar, providing smoke cover and illumination.

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